

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ASUNCI 02759 031257Z

42

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 FRB-03 TRSE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03

CIEP-01 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 STR-04 CEA-01 SCCT-01

EUR-12 IO-13 /115 W

----- 004551

R 022100Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7783

INFO AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 2759

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UY, PA

SUBJ: BLANCO VISIT TO PARAGUAY

REF: ASUNCION 2729

1. SUMMARY. URUGUAYAN FOREIGN MINISTER BLANCO VISITED ASUNCION JUNE 30 - JULY 2 TO EXCHANGE INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION FOR THE ECONOMIC AGREEMENT SIGNED LAST APRIL. SINCE THERE WERE NO OUTSTANDING BILATERAL PROBLEMS TO BE DISCUSSED, INTEREST IN THE VISIT CENTERED ON BLANCO HIMSELF, WHO HAS BEEN PROTRAYED BY THE PARAGUAYAN PRESS AS THE LEADING CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER JUAN CARLOS BLANCO OF URUGUAY ARRIVED IN ASUNCION THE EVENING OF JUNE 30 FOR A 36-HOUR VISIT THAT WAS HEAVY ON CEREMONY AND LIGHT ON SUBSTANCE. ON JULY 1, BLANCO
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PAGE 02 ASUNCI 02759 031257Z

ATTENDED A MASS FOR RECENTLY ASSASSINATED URUGUAYAN AMBASSADOR

CARLOS ABDALA, MET FOR ALMOST AN HOUR WITH PRESIDENT STROESSNER AND THEN IN PRIVATE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER ALBERTO NOGUES, AND PARTICIPATED IN AN EXCHANGE OF INSTRUMENTS OF RATIFICATION OF THE ECONOMIC AGREEMENT SIGNED DURING THE STROESSNER VISIT TO MONTEVIDEO LAST APRIL. DURING A SECOND CEREMONY, BLANCO RECEIVED PARAGUAY'S NATIONAL ORDER OF MERIT. HE DEPARTED ASUNCION EARLY JULY 2.

3. IN HIS SEVERAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS, BLANCO EMPHASIZED THE EXISTING CORDIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO NEIGHBORS WHICH HE (PREDICTABLY) SAID SHOULD BE STRENGTHENED EVEN FURTHER. HE ADVOCATED BREATHING NEW LIFE INTO LAFTA "BECAUSE WE UNDERSTAND THE NECESSITY OF ENVIGORATING THE PROCESS OF INTEGRATION, IN WHICH PARAGUAY AND URUGUAY HAVE COMPLETELY COINCIDING INTERESTS."

4. THE VISIT HAS RECEIVED FAVORABLE PRESS COVERAGE, INCLUDING FRONT PAGE TREATMENT ALL THREE DAYS FROM ASUNCION'S DAILIES. SINCE BORDABERRY'S OUSTER, BLANCO HAS BEEN PORTRAYED BY THE LOCAL MEDIA AS THE LEADING CANDIDATE TO SUCCEED INTERIM PRESIDENT DIMICHEL.

5. FOR THE GOP, THE VISIT WAS A USEFUL OPPORTUNITY TO MEASURE THE MAN WHO IS WIDELY REGARDED AS MOST LIKELY TO BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF URUGUAY. PREDISPOSITION TOWARDS BLANCO ALREADY WAS FAVORABLE; FOLLOWING THE STROESSNER VISIT TO MONTEVIDEO LAST APRIL, NOGUES SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED BY BLANCO'S INTELLIGENCE AND KNOWLEDGEABILITY. NOGUES REPEATED THIS ASSESSMENT IN AN EFFUSIVE SALUTE DURING THE AWARD CEREMONY, PRAISING BLANCO FOR DEMONSTRATING "IMPRESSIVE... TALENT AND DEDICATION" IN THE RELATIVELY SHORT TIME HE HAS HELD PUBLIC OFFICE.

6. THE VISIT PROBABLY ALSO HELPED TO SOOTHE GOP'S GUILTY CONSCIENCE OVER THE ASSASSINATION OF AMBASSADOR ABDALA LAST MONTH, WHICH COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED HAD THE GOP NOT GIVEN SANCTUARY TO CROAT TERRORISTS (ONE OF WHOM SHOT ABDALA THINKING HE WAS THE YUGOSLAV ENVOY). IN THIS REGARD, AMBASSADOR LANDAU SUGGESTED TO BLANCO AT A RECEPTION JULY 1 THAT HE URGE THE SWEDISH AMBASSADOR IN MONTEVIDEO (ALSO ACCREDITED TO ASUNCION) TO PRESS AHEAD

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 ASUNCI 02759 031257Z

WITH A PENDING EXTRADITION REQUEST AGAINST ONE OF THE KILLER'S ASSOCIATES, ANOTHER CROAT WHO ASSASSINATED THE YUGOSLAV AMBASSADOR IN STOCKHOLM IN 1972. BOTH ASSASSINS AND FOUR OTHER CROAT TERRORISTS ARE BEING HELD IN ASUNCION.
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